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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/090,754	03/06/2002	Kenichi Tsuchiya	32405R100	5211
441	7590	01/26/2005	EXAMINER	
SMITH, GAMBRELL & RUSSELL, LLP 1850 M STREET, N.W., SUITE 800 WASHINGTON, DC 20036			JOYCE, WILLIAM C	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			3682	

DATE MAILED: 01/26/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No. 10/090,754 Examiner William C. Joyce	Applicant(s) TSUCHIYA ET AL. Art Unit 3682
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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 18 November 2004.
 2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.
 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 27-39 is/are pending in the application.
 4a) Of the above claim(s) 32-35, 38 and 39 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
 6) Claim(s) 27-29, 36 and 37 is/are rejected.
 7) Claim(s) 30 and 31 is/are objected to.
 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
 10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____. | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____. |
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DETAILED ACTION

This Office Action is in response to the amendment filed November 18, 2004 for the above identified patent application.

Election/Restrictions

1. Claims 32-35 and 38-39 are withdrawn from further consideration pursuant to 37 CFR 1.142(b) as being drawn to a nonelected species, there being no allowable generic or linking claim. Election was made **without** traverse in the reply filed on July 16, 2003.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

2. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

3. Claims 27-29 and 36 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by EP 0 476 458 ('458).

The prior art reference EP '458 illustrates a differential unit for a motor vehicle for transmitting a driving force to a pair of driving wheels while absorbing a rotational difference therebetween, comprising: a case, a differential mechanism accommodated in the case, a drive pinion shaft for transmitting the driving force to the differential mechanism, said drive pinion shaft rotatably supported in the case with at least two bearings having an inner race, respectively, a tubular spacer having an inner diameter

larger than an outer diameter of the drive pinion shaft, said spacer interposed between the inner races of the bearings such that the spacer covers the drive pinion shaft; and radial position regulating means for regulating a radial position of the spacer relative to the drive pinion shaft, said means provided between an inner surface of the spacer and an outer surface of the drive pinion shaft, wherein the regulating means is arced.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

4. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

5. Claim 37 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over EP 0 476 458 ('458) as applied to claim 36 above, and further in view of Rode (US Patent 5,549,397).

Rhode teaches using a tapered roller bearing in a differential unit for a motor vehicle for transmitting a driving force to a pair of driving wheels, wherein the tapered roller bearings are configured to support a thrust force acting on the pinion shaft. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to replace the double ball bearing unit used to support the pinion shaft of EP '458 with a tapered roller bearing, as taught by Rhode, motivation being to support a predetermined thrust force acting on the pinion shaft.

Allowable Subject Matter

6. Claims 30 and 31 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Response to Arguments

7. Applicant's arguments filed November 18, 2004 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. The prior art to EP '458 teaches a tubular spacer element having a protruding section with a cross sectional shape that is convex along a central direction of the tubular spacer so that an inner surface of the protruding section is arched.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to William C. Joyce whose telephone number is (703) 305-5114. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday - Thursday 7:30-5:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, David Bucci can be reached on (703) 308-3668. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

William C. Joyce 1/24/05
William C. Joyce